

**PRINT CULTURE AND LOCAL ISLAMIC
IDENTITY IN WEST JAVA:
Qur'ānic Commentaries In Sundanese Islamic
Magazines (1930-2015)**

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Abstract: *This article focuses on the construction of Islam-Sunda identity in West Java which is reflected in the rubric of the qur'ānic commentary or tafsīr in the Sundanese print media. Our object matter is six Sundanese Islamic magazines published between 1930 and 2015, i.e. Tjahja Islam, Al-Imtisal, Al-Mawa'idz, Almoehtar, Iber and Bina Da'wah using the analysis of identity construction. Although Sundanese Muslims are divided into traditionalist and modernist, we confirm that all Sundanese Islamic magazines show the local Islamic identity which is called as Islam-Sunda. The identity of Islam-Sunda in the magazine rubric of qur'ānic commentary can be seen at following aspects: the interpretation of surah which have an important role in Sundanese daily life, the interpretation of Islamic stories, the use of Sundanese phrases that touch their hearts, the formation of a pious Sundanese personality and the involvement of Islamic scholars or ajengan as an exegete of the Qur'ān. This study asserts that the magazine rubric of qur'ān commentary does not only have a lot of Islamic messages, but also is an expression of Islamic identity in Sundanese print media.*

الملخص: تركز هذه المقالة على بناء الهوية الإسلامية السونداوية في جاوة الغربية التي تنعكس في عناوين التفسير القرآن عن وسائل الإعلام المطبوعة السونداوية. والموضوع

من ذلك هو ستة مجلات السونداوية نُشرت من خلال سنة ١٣٩١-٢٠١٠، وهي: سحيا الإسلام (Cahya Islam)، والامتثال (al-Imtisal)، والمواظ (Al-Mawa'idz)، والمختار (Almoechtar)، وإيبير (Iber)، وبيننا دعوة (Bina Da'wah). فمن خلال تحليل البناء الهوية، أكد هذا البحث أنه على الرغم من وجود تنوع في البيانات الإسلامية في جاوة الغربية، بين التقليديين والحداثيين، إلا أنها جميعًا تظهر على نفس الهوية الإسلامية المحلية. وتلك الهوية تظهر في عناوين التفسير القرآن عن المجلات، مثل: التعريض تفاسير السورة الوظيفية في الحياة اليومية السونداوية، وتفسير الآية عن القصص الإسلامية، واستعمال العبارة السونداوية الإسلامية التي تتأثر إلى القلب، ومهمة تشكيل الشخصية السونداوية الصالحة، وإشراك أجانجان (ajengan) كالمفسر. وتدل هذه على أن عناوين التفسير القرآن في المجلات لا تملأ بالرسائل الدينية فحسب، بل أنه كجزء من التعبير عن الهوية الإسلامية السونداوية في وسائل الإعلام المطبوعة.

Abstrak: Artikel ini memfokuskan pada masalah konstruksi identitas Islam Sunda di Jawa Barat yang tercermin dalam rubrik tafsir Al-Qur'an di media cetak Sunda. Objeknya adalah enam majalah Sunda yang terbit antara tahun 1930-2015, yakni Tjahja Islam, Al-Imtisal, Al-Mawa'idz, Almoechtar, Iber dan Bina Da'wah. Melalui analisis konstruksi identitas, kajian ini menegaskan bahwa meski terdapat ragam keberagaman Islam di Jawa Barat, antara tradisional dan modernis, tetapi semua menunjukkan identitas Islam lokal yang hampir sama, yakni konstruksi identitas Islam. Dalam rubrik tafsir Al-Qur'an, identitas tersebut bisa dilihat dalam sajian penafsiran surah-surah yang sangat fungsional dalam keseharian orang Sunda, tafsir kisah-kisah Islami, penggunaan ungkapan Sunda Islami yang mengena dalam hati, misi pembentukan pribadi Sunda yang saleh dan keterlibatan ajengan sebagai mufasir. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa rubrik tafsir di majalah tidak hanya sarat dengan pesan keagamaan, tetapi juga menjadi bagian dari ekspresi identitas Islam Sunda dalam media cetak.

Keywords: qur'anic commentary, magazine, Islam, Sundanese, identity.

INTRODUCTION

In the period of the early twentieth century, Priangan was not only preoccupied with the emergence of various socio-religious organizations, but also characterized by increasingly national, ethnic and Islamic identity. It is not only reformist and traditionalist Muslim organizations, but also regional ethnic organizations that awaken social, culture, and regional politics consciousness.¹ In the Indonesian age in motion, precisely in the last decade of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, the awakening of regional social and politics consciousness is characterized by increasing the circulation of publishing Malay and regional magazines.²

Since the 1930s, the consciousness of Islam and Sunda, for instance, also have increased in Priangan, where Sundanese ethnic lived as the second biggest population in Indonesia.³ One of the consciousnesses can be seen in Sundanese Islamic magazines which were published in several regions in Priangan. They were not only published by modernist Muslim organizations, but also traditionalist Muslim.⁴ Although both modernist and tradisionalist Muslims compete each other ideologically, the emergence of various Sundanese Islamic magazines shows an effort to build similar Islamic identity, namely the consciousness to fight for Islam to be more dominant in daily life of Sundanese people. One of the important rubrics of Sundanese Islamic magazines that expressed the identity of Islam-Sunda is qur'ānic commentary or *tafsīr*. It is a rubric that shows not only an effort of Muslims to uphold the identity of Islam-Sunda based on the teachings of the Qur'ān, but also their responses

¹ Edi S. Ekadjati, 'Paguyuban Pasundan: A Sundanese Revival (1913-1918)', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, no. 66 (2003): 21–51. Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996, Cet. ke-8, 8th ed. (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), 316.

² Takashi Shiraiishi, *Zaman Bergerak: Radikalisme Rakyat di Jawa, 1912-1926*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 2005), 42.

³ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 104.

⁴ Atep Kurnia, 'Melacak Media Islam Berbahasa Sunda', in *The Rubric of "Selisik" HU. Pikiran Rakyat*, vol. November 2017 (Monday, 2017), 21. On PERSIS, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis), 1923 to 1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

to religious-social situation. It is a form of Islamic identity that tends to be stronger and clearer than Javanese Islam.⁵

This study focuses on the construction of Islamic identity in West Java which is reflected in the rubric of qur'ānic commentary in the magazines. We will study six Sundanese Islamic magazines which published between 1930 and 2015, i.e. *Tjahja Islam* (the Islamic light), *Al-Imtisal* (the explanation), *Al-Mawa'idz* (the admonition), *Almoechtar* (the choice), *Iber* (the news) and *Bina Da'wah* (Islamic proselytizing construction) using the construction of identity analysis. We argue that Sundanese print culture is one of expressions of the identity construction of Islam-Sunda in the modern Priangan. It marks the strengthening of literary shift of *santris* into modern culture, i.e. from *pégon* (Sundanese or Javanese using Arabic script) to latin script, from manuscript tradition to print culture.⁶ It is a formation of vertical mobility of the *santris* who have important role in building the Islamic discourse in West Java.

The construction of Islam-Sunda identity in Sundanese Islamic magazines appeared in an interaction of identifying itself with Sundanese culture in certain situations.⁷ According to Foucault, the identity adheres in a discourse. Therefore, the understanding (of qur'ānic commentators) on the world is shaped by frame of mind which culturally available as well as limits their identities.⁸ Thus, the rubric of qur'ānic commentary in Sundanese Islamic magazines has a contribution in order to strengthen the identity of Islam-Sunda.⁹

In the context of qur'ānic commentary in modern Indonesia, there are no many scholars who studied the rubric of *tafsīr* in Indonesian

⁵ Chaider S. Bamualim, 'Negotiating Islamisation and Resistance: A Study of Religions, Politics and Social Change in West Java from the Early 20th Century to the Present' (Dissertation, Leiden University, 2015), 11. Abdul Syukur, 'Islam, Etnisitas Dan Politik Identitas: Kasus Sunda', *Miqot, Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* XXXV, no. 2 (December 2011): 409.

⁶ Mikihiro Moriyama, *Semangat Baru: Kolonialisme, Budaya Cetak dan Kesastraan Sunda Abad ke-19*, trans. Suryadi (Jakarta: KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia), 2003), 34.

⁷ Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 71. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), 62.

⁸ Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in *Untying Texts: A Post Structuralist Reader*, by Robert Young (London: Routledge and Keagen Paul, 1981), 52–61.

⁹ Neneng Yanti Khozanatu Lahpan, 'Negotiating Ethnicity and Islam in Musical Performances in West Java Indonesia' (Monash University, 2015), 6.

Islamic magazines.¹⁰ Similarly, there are no many scholars who studied Islamic magazines in local language. Our previous studies on Sundanese *tafsīr* also have not mentioned the rubric of qur'ānic commentary in the magazines.¹¹ One of the reasons is not only related to the availability of data of the magazines, but also there are not many Sundanese Islamic magazines that contain a special rubric of *tafsīr*. There are only one or two Sundanese Islamic magazines which published until now. Nevertheless, the articles of Gusmian and Naqiyah became a preliminary study that shows importance of the rubric of *tafsīr* in Islamic magazines in Indonesia.¹²

This study is not only illustrates the development of Sundanese Islamic magazines historically, but also focuses on the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines in West Java. Our study can be regarded as an early introduction that contributes to the qur'ānic studies on popular writing styles in Indonesia. It also can be early study on the relations of the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines with the construction of identity of Islam and ethnicity in Indonesia.

ISLAMIC MAGAZINES IN SUNDANESE

It is not easy to identify how many Sundanese Islamic magazines are published in West Java. Preliminary work of Atep Kurnia described the Sundanese print media based on a number of cataloging of books, magazines and newspapers. Other source can also be gained from several entries of the encyclopedia of West Java¹³ and *At-Taqwaa* magazine that inform publishing the magazines in early twentieth century.¹⁴

¹⁰ Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'an* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1994). Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002). M. Nurdin Zuhdi, *Pasar Raya Tafsir Indonesia, dari Kontestasi Metodologi Hingga Kontestualisasi* (Yogyakarta: Kaukaba, 2014).

¹¹ Jajang A . Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Tatar Sunda* (Bandung: Mujahid-Diktis Kemenag RI, 2014), 167–240.

¹² Islah Gusmian, 'Tafsir Al-Qur'an Dan Kritik Sosial: Syu'bah Asa Dalam Dinamika Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Indonesia', *Maghza* 1, no. 2 (2016): 67–80. Naqiyah, 'Contextual Tafsir in the Risalah Nahdlatul Ulama Magazine (A New Model of Indonesian Tafsir)', *Istiqro'* 15, no. 1 (2017): 205–30.

¹³ Hairus Salim, *Ensiklopedi Jawa Barat* (Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, 2018).

¹⁴ In addition *At-Taqwaa*, *Sipatahoenan* magazine as a source of data, the information of Sundanese magazines can be acquired from cataloging books, such

Our preliminary study shows that there are Sundanese Islamic magazines that has been widely published from 1920s to 1950s. The magazines which published in the 1920s were *Bala Tentara Islam*, the Islamic army (1924-1925) and *Al-Imtisal* (since 1927). The period of the 1930s can be considered the most productive period in the publication of Sundanese Islamic magazines, such as *Tjahja Islam* (1930-1934), *Al-Hidajatoel-Islamijah*, the Islamic guidance (1931), *Madjallah Atikan Ra'jat*, the education of people magazine (1931), *Al-Moe'min*, the believer (1932-1939), *Al-Mawaidz* (1933-1936), *Al-Moechtar* (1933-1940), *Al-Idhar*, the testimony (1934), *Penggoegah Islam*, the reformer of Islam (1934), *Al-Bajan*, the explaining (1934), *Mitra*, the friend (1934-1939), *Al-Itisom*, the protection (1935), *Taufieq*, the God's guidance (1936), *At-Taqwaa* (1936-1937), *Falsafah-Islamijah*, the Islamic philosophy (1936-1937), *Al-Islah*, the correction (1937), *Al-Bisjarah*, the good news (1937) and *Madjallah Madzhab Ahli Soennah*, Sunni school magazine (1937). One of magazines that we did not know when published was *Miftahoes Sa'adah*, the key of happiness.

Meanwhile, in the period of the 1940s until the 1950s, the publication of Islamic magazines in Sundanese tended to decrease than before. In this period, we can only find *Batjaan Moerid*, the student reading (1940-1941), *At-Taqwaa* which published for the second time from 1949 to 1950 after stopped in 1937, and *Madjallah Al-Mushlih* which was published from 1952 to 1954.¹⁵

In the period of 1970s to 1980s, we can find *Iber* magazine published in August 1967. *Iber* was founded by an activist of Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) or Islamic union in Bandung, K.H.E. Abdullah (1967-1994). Abdullah is a younger brother of K.H.E. Abdurrahman, the former chairman of PERSIS (1962-1983) and the manager of monthly magazine *At-Taqwaa* that stopped in the

as G. Ockeloen (*Catalogus dari Boekoe-boekoe dan Madjalah-madjalah yang diterbitkan di Hindia Belanda dari tahoen 1870-1937*), 1966, cataloging newspapers that published by Perpustakaan Nasional RI, such as *Katalog Mikrofilm Surat Kabar Koleksi Perpustakaan Nasional RI Periode Tahun 1852-1957* (1997), *Katalog Mikrofilm Surat Kabar Koleksi Perpustakaan Nasional RI Periode Tahun 1856-1981* (1998), and *Katalog Mikrofilm Surat Kabar Koleksi Perpustakaan Nasional RI Periode Tahun 1888-1998* (1999).

¹⁵ Kurnia, 'Melacak Media Islam Berbahasa Sunda', 21.

1950s.¹⁶ The publication of *Iber* also finally stopped in 2015. In this period, we also find *Bina Da'wah* which published since 1978. *Bina Da'wah* was published by the branch of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) in West Java. It is a modernist Muslim organization that founded by Masyumi activist, M. Natsir. *Bina Da'wah* magazine was founded by M. Rusyad Nurdin (1918-2002), a militant '*ulamā*', Masyumi politician, and DDII activist who was born in West Sumatera.¹⁷ The mission of *Bina Da'wah* is almost same to *Media Dakwah* magazine which published in Indonesian language by DDII in Jakarta.¹⁸

In addition, the information of Sundanese Islamic magazines is also briefly can be found in *At-Taqwaa* magazine which has been mentioned in another magazine in Priangan. "There are many magazines published in Priangan: *At-Taqwaa*, *Sinar Islam*, *Asj-Sjura*, *Suwarā Muslim*, *Gajatul-Bajan*, *Al-Maarif*, *Taufieq*, *Al-Imtisal*, *Al-Mawa'idz*, *Al-I'tisham*, *At-Tabib*, *Al-Mansjur*, *Al-Huda*, *Al-Ishlah*".¹⁹ It shows that there are about fourteen Islamic magazines in Sundanese. Thus, it can further clarify the information about the number publication of Sundanese Islamic magazines. There are about thirty magazines which were published from the period of 1920s to 1960s. It is a considerable amount of regional magazines published in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, if we look at the area where the magazines were published, we can find that all Sundanese Islamic magazines published in Priangan. Thus includes the eastern of West Java to the west, such as Tasikmalaya, Garut, Bandung, Cianjur, Bogor, Batavia

¹⁶ Dadan Wildan, 'Pergulatan Persatuan Islam (Persis) dalam Dakwah di Tatar Sunda (Kajian Terhadap Majalah Sunda "Iber" Sebagai Media Dakwah Berbahasa Sunda)' (Konferensi Internasional Budaya Sunda II, Gedung Merdeka, 2011), 1.

¹⁷ See, for instance, the editorial board of *Bina Da'wah* No. 425 Syawal 1436 H/ Agustus 2015 M, 2.

¹⁸ R. William Liddle, 'Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia', in *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, ed. Mark R. Woodward (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1996), 323–56. Ade Armando, 'Citra Kaum Pembaharu Islam dalam Propaganda Media Dakwah', *Ulumul Qur'an* 4, no. 3 (1993). Burhanuddin, 'The Conspiracy of Jews: The Quest for Anti-Semitism in Media Dakwah', *Graduate Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 5, no. 2 (2007): 53–76.

¹⁹ Rubaie Wijaya, 'Publikasi Djeung Pers Islam', *At-Taqwaa Madjallah Boelanan*, October 1950, 22 edition, 7.

and Sukabumi. Tasikmalaya plays a very prominent role, because Sundanese Islamic magazines were mostly published in Tasikmalaya, such as *Al-Imtisal*, *Al-Mawaidz*, *Al-Moechtar*, *Al-Mansoer*, *Al-Idhar*, *Madjallah Madzhab Ahli Soennah*, *Al-Bisjarah* and *Al-Itisom*.²⁰

It is interesting that the publishers of Sundanese Islamic magazines are ideologically very diverse, from the conservative to the progressive, from the traditionalist to the modernist. The publishers come from various associations, such as the branch of Sarekat Islam (SI) in Garut, Madjlis Ahli Soennah (MAS) Garut, Perkoempoelan Goeroe Ngaji (PGN) Tasikmalaya, Nahdlatul Oelama (NO) Tasikmalaya, Komite Pangatik Islam, Goeroe Instituut Mochammadijah, Persatoean Islam Bandoeng, Persjarikatan Oelama Tjabang Bandoeng, Persatuan Alim Ulama Islam Indonesia Bandung, the branch of DDII in West Java and Masjid Agung Cianjur.

The period of 1930s was the most productive period of publishing Sundanese Islamic magazines than 1920s or 1940s. The period of 1930s was an anomaly. It was known as “the time of miss” or malaise when the global financial crisis occurred. The crisis also influenced the Dutch East Indies. However, the publishing of Sundanese Islamic magazines was increasing at that time. It was associated with the increase of the people those who are literate of roman script (*aksara walanda*) as a result of modern education of Dutch policy since the late nineteenth century. The implication of roman literacy is able to encourage Sundanese literate people to develop Sundanese Islamic magazines.²¹ It is understandable that then the private printing business was growing in Priangan, along with the increasing of literate people and the availability of printing and paper.²²

It is interesting that the literate culture of Sundanese people then cause critical response to social-religious situation in Indonesia, the critical attitude that in turn brings the spirit of Islamic renewal among modernist Muslims in West Java. Thus, it is understood that there are many Sundanese Islamic magazines were published by the modernist Muslim activist, such as PERSIS. The modernist Islamic thought

²⁰ Miftahul Falah, ‘Pers di Kota Tasikmalaya, 1900-1942’, *Sosiohumaniora* 14, no. 2 (July 2012): 116–31. *Al-Mawaidz* (Pangroedjong Nahdlatul Oelama), 18 July 1933. *Al-Imtisal*, 1 January 1931. Kurnia, ‘Melacak Media Islam Berbahasa Sunda’.

²¹ Kurnia, ‘Melacak Media Islam Berbahasa Sunda’, 21.

²² Moriyama, *Semangat Baru: Kolonialisme, Budaya Cetak dan Kesastraan Sunda Abad Ke-19*, 261–62.

influenced by Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad ‘Abduh who also used print media in Cairo, such as the magazine of *Al-Manar*.²³

In addition, the publication of Sundanese Islamic magazines between the 1920s and 1950s cannot be separated from the role of Islamic scholars or *ajengan*. Many of the *ajengans* in Priangan are involved both as a member of the magazine editorial board as well as a contributor to the magazines.²⁴

If we read from a literacy viewpoint, it can be said that *ajengan* emphasizes the importance of preaching Islam through print media. The significant role of print media relating to the uniformity of script and language that will be more remembered and will not be misinterpreted than oral. The oral tradition usually can easily be remembered and forgotten. Thus, it can be said that the increasing of Sundanese Islamic magazines cannot be separated from the role of *ajengan*.²⁵

QUR’ĀNIC COMMENTARIES IN SUNDANESE MAGAZINES

This section will present an overview of the qur’ānic commentary in the Sundanese Islamic magazines. It is important to give the reader an explanation on the peculiarities of *tafsīr* in various magazines. Not all Sundanese Islamic magazines contain the rubric of *tafsīr*. There are only six magazines which use the rubric of *tafsīr*, i.e. *Al-Imtisal*, *Almoechtar*, *Tjahja Islam*, *Iber*, *Al-Mushlih* and *Bina Da’wah*.

There are two ideological tendencies of Sundanese Islamic magazines, namely the ideology of modernist and traditionalist Muslims. *Tjahja Islam*, *At-Taqwaa*, *Iber*, and *Bina Da’wah* were

²³ Jutta Bluhm Warn, ‘A Preliminary Statement on the Dialogue Established between the Reform Magazine Al-Manar and the Malay-Indonesian World’, *Indonesia Circle* 32 (1983): 35–42. Jajat Burhanudin, ‘Aspiring for Islamic Reform: Southeast Asian Requests for Fatwas in Al-Manar’, *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (2005): 9–26.

²⁴ See the authors in each editions, one of examples is *Al-Imtisal*, 26 March 1931, 37. *Tjahja Islam*, 1 July 1930, 1. *Al-Moe’min*, 1 July 1351, 1. *Almoechtar*, 1 January 1933, 2. *Madjalah Al-Mushlih*, 15 August 1952, 2. *Iber*, 27 October 1402, 2. *Iber*, 15 August 2001, 2. Mohammad Iskandar, *Para Pengemban Amanah, Pergulatan Pemikiran Kiai dan Ulama di Jawa Barat, 1900-1950* (Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, 2001), 178.

²⁵ Atep Kurnia, ‘Para Kiai Berperan dalam Penerbitan Media Islam’, in *Pikiran Rakyat* (rubric of “Selisik” HU, 2017), 22.

published by modernist Muslim activists, such as Majdlis Ahli Soennah (M.A.S.) or the committee of Ahlus Sunnah Garut, PERSIS and DDII.²⁶ Meanwhile, *Al-Imtisal*, *Al-Mawa'idz*, and *Almoechtar* were published by traditionalist Muslim activist, especially Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the resurgence of '*ulamā*'.²⁷ However, despite there are ideological differences between modernist and traditionalist Muslims, all the magazines show the same identity as what we called as Islam-Sunda. It is a construction of Islamic identity that shows the mutual influence between Sundanese cultural background and faithful and pious Islam.

Tjahja Islam magazine was published by a modernist Muslim group, Majelis Ahli Sunnah (M.A.S.) in Cilame, Garut since July 1, 1930. The magazine contains a rubric of translation of the Qur'ān in several editions entitled *Ajat-ajat Qoer'an*, the qur'ānic verses. This magazine does not contain qur'ānic commentary or *tafsīr*. It is different with other Sundanese Islamic magazines. However, although there are only several quotes from some verses of the Qur'ān, we can understand the purpose of translation of the qur'ānic verses.²⁸

However, *Tjahja Islam* magazine is different from *Al-Imtisal* or often abbreviated as A.I. which contains the rubric of the qur'ānic commentary in several editions. The rubric name corresponds to the name of the *surah*, such as *Tafsir Surat Tabarok*, *Tafsir Aliflammim Sajdah* and others. These *surahs* are popular and often read by Sundanese Muslims in their daily lives, such as *Tabarok* or *Al-Mulk*, *Al-Sajdah*, *Al-Waqi'ah*, *Yasin* and others. The commentary of *surah Al-Mulk*, for instance, published in number 21, December 5, 1930 and finish in edition number 9, 15 Moeharam 1350 (June 2, 1931).²⁹

Meanwhile, *Almoechtar* magazine also contains the rubric of *tafsīr* in several editions looks like *Al-Imtisal*. The name of its rubric corresponds to the name of *surah* which discussed, namely *Tafsir Soerat Qisos* (QS. 28). This is the qur'ānic *surah* relating to the

²⁶ Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996, Cet. Ke-8, 104. Iskandar, *Para Pengemban Amanah, Pergulatan Pemikiran Kiai Dan Ulama Di Jawa Barat, 1900-1950*, 172. Liddle, 'Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia', 323.

²⁷ Falah, 'Pers Di Kota Tasikmalaya, 1900-1942', 116.

²⁸ 1 July 1930, 10.

²⁹ *Al-Imtisal*, 5 December 1930, 342. *Al-Imtisal*, 2 June 1931, 120–21.

story of prophets, especially the story of Qarun.³⁰ However, another Sundanese Islamic magazines, *Al-Mawa'idz* does not contain a special rubric of qur'ānic commentary. We can find the commentary on qur'ānic verses in certain articles on Islam, such as an article entitled "*Sikepna Manusa Kana Agama*," the attitude of human to religion.³¹

It is not only *Al-Imtisal* and *Almoechtar*, *Madjalah Al-Mushlih* or abbreviated as A.M. which published from 1952 to 1954 also contains a rubric of qur'ānic commentary in several editions. The name of its rubric corresponds to the name of *surah* which was discussed, namely *Surat Al-Fatihah* and *Surat Al-Baqarah*. However, the author who wrote the rubric was not mentioned. The author initially translated the qur'ānic verse and then gave the commentary in the end of the article.³²

Meanwhile, *Iber* magazine which was managed by the activist of PERSIS in Bandung contains the rubric of *tafsir* in almost every edition which was published from 1978 to 2015. The name of rubric is *Tafsir al-Qur'an*. There are many authors of *tafsir* in *Iber* magazine which change for many times, from one editor to others. The first author of *tafsir* is K.H. E. Abdullah or abbreviated as *heab*, then continued by K.H. A. Syuhada until the last edition in 2015. The rubric of *tafsir* lastly was written by K.H. Abdurrahman Ks. The *Iber* magazine contains the rubric of *tafsir* in a series formation of *surah*, from Al-Fatihah, Al-Baqarah, Ali 'Imran and Al-Nisa. Although in some editions, we sometime also obtained the rubric of *tafsir* that contain another *surah*.³³

Finally, *Bina Da'wah* magazine as the one and only Sundanese Islamic magazine that still published until now also contains a rubric of *tafsir* in several editions entitle *Rohangan Tafsir*, the room of *tafsir*. The author of *tafsir* changes for many times, from one generation to others. There are several authors of *tafsir* in *Bina Da'wah* magazine, such as Yaya Hidayat, Muchsin Alfikri and Uu Suhendar. Along with the changing of the author, the object of *tafsir* also changes. Several editions in 1990s discussed *tafsir* of *Juz 'amma* which contain many short *surahs*. However, the author sometimes

³⁰ *Almoechtar*, 15 November 1936, 337–339.

³¹ *Al-Mawa'idz*, *Sikepna Manusa Kana Agama*, vol. 1, 1933, 3–6.

³² See, for instance, *Madjalah Al-Mushlih*, 1 October 1952, 8–9.

³³ *Iber*, th IV 1974, 3–5.

also discussed a particular theme in a series and then commented the verse in accordance with the qur'ānic *mushaf*, such as Al-Fatihah, Al-Baqarah, Ali 'Imran and now has come to Al-Nisa'.³⁴

Above all, it is clear that there are various rubrics of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazine in West Java. It can be divided into modernist and traditionalist Muslims orientations of *tafsīr* as seen from the publishers who published the magazines. Several publishers were founded by modernist and traditionalist Muslims organization, such as PERSIS, NU and others. In addition, different orientations of *tafsīr* also can be seen from the formation of the rubric of *tafsīr*. There are some authors who only present the essence of *tafsīr* through the translation of the Qur'ān, the *tafsīr* of daily *surahs* that usually read by Sundanese people, such as Yasin, Al-Mulk, Al-Waqi'ah and others, the *tafsīr* of *surah* that contains the prophet stories, and the *tafsīr* of some *surahs* in accordance with order of qur'ānic *mushaf* in a series, i.e. Al-Fatihah, Al-Baqarah and so on. Although these *tafsīrs* in the Sundanese Islamic magazines are diverse, all of the authors have same social background, namely as an *ajengan* or *kiai*.

THE IDENTITY OF ISLAM-SUNDA IN THE RUBRIC OF *TAFSĪR*

Reading the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines show that the mission of these magazines tends to lead to the formation of an increasingly Islamic identity in West Java. Although there are varieties of Muslim organizations in West Java as reflected in their ideological missions, between modernist and traditionalist, all Sundanese Islamic magazines show the same Islamic identity, namely Islam-Sunda. The construction of identity of Islam-Sunda in the modern Priangan cannot be separated from the influence of Islamic print media as reflected in the rubric of qur'ānic commentary or *tafsīr*. The Sundanese Islamic magazines have an important contribution in strengthening the identity of Islam-Sunda. It appears in the rubric of *tafsīr* explaining the qur'ānic verses in the framework of strengthening Islam. Following section show some characters of identity of Islam-Sunda in the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines.

³⁴ Bina Da'wah, Syawal H/August 2015 M 1436, 24–27.

1. *Tafsīr* of daily *surahs*

The qur'ānic verses and *surahs* is often read by Sundanese people every day. It adorns daily religious life from birth to death. Sundanese people usually recite the Qur'ān in following rites: pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage, sickness, death and many others rituals. It can be said that the great tradition of the Qur'ān that is generally practiced in the Muslim world is developed creatively into the unique small traditions of the Qur'ān in Priangan.³⁵ The important role of qur'ānic position in Sundanese culture makes it a generic culture inherited from previous generation collectively.³⁶ It can be seen from following *surahs* that usually read: *surah* Al-Fatihah that commonly used in almost all rituals; *surah* Yusuf or Maryam that is read to expect pious and beautiful or handsome children; *surah* Al-Mulk that is read to keep away from the torture of the grave or expect the life becomes more prosperous; *surah* Al-Waqi'ah that is read in order to bring a fortune; and *surah* Yasin which is read to expect the dead people will find peace in hereafter. Therefore, the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines is also relating to the verse or *surah* that read by Sundanese people in their daily lives. All *surahs* that are commonly read and memorized by Sundanese people then shape their identities as a Sundanese Muslims who seeks close to the Qur'ān.

The rubric of *tafsīr* in *Al-Imtisal* magazine, for instance, contains the interpretation of the Qur'ān according to the *surah* that is often read by Sundanese Muslims in their daily lives, such as *Tafsir Surat Tabarok*, *Tafsir Aliflammim Sajdah*, *Al-Waqi'ah*, *Yasin* and others. While, other Islamic magazines, such as *Madjalah Al-Mushlih*, *Iber* and *Bina Da'wah* generally contain the rubric of *tafsīr* according to the order of qur'ānic *mushaf* in series, from *Al-Fatihah*, *Al-Baqarah* and etc. The *surah* *Al-Fatihah* becomes the first *surah* that is interpreted. It is not only relating to the position of *Al-Fatihah* as the first *surah* in the Qur'ān, but also the *surah* is very popular in all Islamic rituals. *Al-Fatihah* is almost always read by Sundanese people in relation to the practice of *tawassul*, Islamic rituals that use various intermediaries, and other Islamic activities in the form of prayer

³⁵ Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture, An Anthropological Approach to Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), 70.

³⁶ Irwan Abdullah, *Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007).

readings to obtain God's blessing (*tabarruk*).³⁷ Following *tafsīr* is one of examples which published by *Al-Imtisal* magazine when makes a comment on *Surat Tabarak* or *Al-Mulk* [QS. 67: 28-30]:

"*Qul ara'aitum in aṣṣabḥ mā 'ukum ghawran,*" tell me Muhammad! What will you do if your wells are dry, so that you cannot get the water? "*Faman ya 'īkum bi mā 'ma 'īn,*" who will bring (the water) except Allah, but why don't you believe in a resurrection in the grave? Everyone who reads this verse, (especially) in the word *ma 'īn*, should read "*Allāh rabb al- 'ālamīn.*" It was narrated in hadith: "This verse is read in front of an arrogant man." At the end of the verse, they replied that they are: "who will bring water (with) crowbar and hoe." So, suddenly the man is blind. *Wallāh a 'lam.*"³⁸

It is interesting that there is an explanation from the editorial of magazine at the end of the rubric of *tafsīr*. The editorial gives the consideration of why certain *surahs* are chosen to be published in the rubric of *tafsīr* in *Al-Imtisal*. The editorial said that the choice of rubric of *tafsīr* of certain *surah*, because it was usually read by Sundanese people every day to ask for God's blessings. There are also often many readers request to interpret the *surahs*.³⁹ This shows that the editorial of *Al-Imtisal* realizes that the choice of *tafsīr* as one of rubrics of the magazine relating to the strengthening the Islamic identity of Sundanese people. The identity is built on the basis of the Qur'ān as the main source of its basic teachings.

2. Islamic story in the form of *tafsīr* (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ/28)

In addition to selected *surah* that was interpreted, the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines also contain *surahs* on some stories in the Qur'ān. *Almoechtar* magazine, for instance, contains a special rubric of *surah* Al-Qaṣaṣ. It is a *surah* that contains the story of prophets. The rubric of *surah* Al-Qaṣaṣ cannot be separated from the Sundanese people tradition which has always been familiar with oral stories as part of their cultural richness. The significance of oral stories in Sundanese daily life can be traced to the Sundanese old

³⁷ Julian Millie, 'Supplicating, Naming, Offering: Tawassul in West Java', *Journal of South East Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2008): 107.

³⁸ *Al-Imtisal*, 2 June 1931, 120.

³⁹ 121.

manuscripts of sixteenth century.⁴⁰ There are also various Sundanese oral literatures in the form of legends, myths, fables, folklore and *carita pantun*, such as *Sangkuriang*, *Si Kabayan*, *Lutung Kasarung*, *Munding Laya Di Kusuma*, *Ciung Wanara*, and others.⁴¹ Following *tafsīr* is an example of the interpretation of *surah* Al-Qa□a□ [QS. 28: 76-81] published in *Almoechtar* which telling the story of Qarun and Moses:

“*Qāla innamā ūfītuhu ‘alā ‘ilmin ‘indī,*” Qarun says. He answers (the questions) which asked by his people who remind him. “Hi! I have the gift of treasure, because I have so much knowledge... According to several opinions of ‘*ulama*’, something which proud by Qarun is chemistry (the science of making gold). He knows the chemistry, because Allah has been commanded Moses to write the Torah with gold. Moses then was taught chemistry by God and then Moses teaches three peoples (divided into three pieces of knowledge), Yusa, Kalib bin Yuqina and Qarun. Finally, Qarun got all three knowledge of making gold. Qarun can make his own gold, because of his knowledge of chemistry is complete. He makes lead into silver...⁴²

Above commentary of *surah* Al-Qa□a□ in *Almoechtar* magazine shows the story of Qarun who boasted of his wealth for mastering chemistry. This kind of story is popular among Sundanese people. The story of Qarun in *surah* Al-Qa□a□ which was published in *Almoechtar* would not only be related to the nature of Sundanese people who love the traditional story, but also relates to disseminating Islamic stories as a “counter culture” over the old Sundanese stories which is highly admired by Sundanese people. Moreover, the story of Moses and Qarun in the magazine relates to the awareness of Sundanese people to build the construction of Islam-Sunda identity by imitating the story of prophets in the past.

⁴⁰ Salch Danasmita, *Sewaka Darma, Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian Dan Amanat Galunggung* (Bandung: Bagian Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Sunda (Sundanologi) Dirjen Kebudayaan Depdikbud Bandung, 1987).

⁴¹ Ajip Rosidi, ‘My Experiences in Recording Pantun Sunda’, *Indonesia* 16 (1973): 106–7.

⁴² *Almoechtar*, 15 November 1936, 337–39.

3. Sundanese phrase that touching the heart

In addition to the *tafsīr* of certain *surahs* and qur'ānic story, the identity of Islam-Sunda in the magazines can be seen from the use of phrase that touching the heart of Sundanese readers. Sundanese phrase was believed to have a soul that can touch the heart through its structure and diction of sentences. It is a Sundanese phrase that usually uses *paribasa* (proverb), *babasan* (figurative utterance), and *kekecapan* (idiomatic expression). These phrases are short and dense, but full of meaning. All phrases are expressed aesthetically and contain elements of rhythm and sound.⁴³

Tjahja Islam magazine, for instance, that was published by modernist group of Majelis Ahli Sunnah (M.A.S.) Cilame Garut, contains some Sundanese phrases based on the qur'ānic verse. These phrases are very short sentences and dense that similar to *paribasa* or *babasan*. It is like a slogan that based on the essence of the qur'ānic message. The author of these phrases is aware the importance role of *paribasa*, *babasan* or *kecap-kecapan* in Sundanese life. Therefore, the author tries to make Sundanese phrases taken from qur'ānic verses. Following sentence is an example of Sundanese phrase that published in *Tjahja Islam* 1, July 1, 1930 (4 Sapar 1340), Tahoen ka-1 (that have different numbering of Qur'ānic verses):

“*Seuri koedoe saeutik. Tjeurik koedoe loba*” (a little laugh, a lot of crying) (*Qoer-an Soerah IX, 83.*) (*sic!*).⁴⁴

Above quote of the phrase “a little laugh, a lot of crying” is taken from *surah* Al-Taubah [QS. 9: 83] (supposed to be verse 82). It shows that the author makes a short and dense phrase like a *babasan* and *paribasa* in Sundanese tradition. Sundanese traditional phrases are the inner wealth of Sundanese culture that containing advices, values, norms and rules of conduct.⁴⁵ The magazine editor try to strengthen the Islam-Sunda identity by creating a kind of “counter-culture” against the Sundanese phrases that are already very popular

⁴³ Momon Wirakusumah and Buldan Djajawiguna, *Kandaga Tata Basa Sunda* (Bandung: Ganaco, 1957), 58. Panitia Kamus Lembaga Basa & Sastra Sunda (LBSS), ‘Kamus Umum Basa Sunda’ (Bandung: Terate, 1985), 43–44.

⁴⁴ 1 July 1930, 10.

⁴⁵ Ajip Rosidi, *Babasan & Paribasa: Kabeungharan Basa Sunda* (Bandung: Kiblat Buku Utama, 2005), 6–7.

and inherent in the daily life of Sundanese people by making a similar phrase that is directly adopted from the Qur'ān.

It is not only *Tjahja Islam*, other magazines, such as *Almoechtar*, also show the construction of Islam-Sunda identity by giving a new meaning of traditional Sundanese phrases. These traditional phrases were used in order to clarify the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Following quotation of *tafsīr* of *surah* Al-Hujurat [QS. 49: 10] published in an article entitle *Sikepna manusa kana agama* (human attitude to the religion), *Almoechtar* no. 1, 1933:

Innamā al-mu'minūn ikhwah fa aslihū bain akhawaikum wattaqūllāh la'allakum turhamūn. "All the believers are brothers, one bond in the same line, all believers are bound and united in one faith. It is like the descendants that bind all descendants to be brothers." So, all Muslims must be the same way to achieve their goals (*ka tjai djadi saleuwi, ka darat djadi salebak*). Therefore, you must make tidiness, peace among your brothers, do not be selfish (*oelah pagirang-girang tampian*), you must be able to bring themselves together, do not fight with your brothers. The believer must fear God, must obey His command. Do not have the characteristic of feeling already insufficient (*kagok asong*), you must stay away from God's prohibition to be loved by God ..." Haji Dahlan, Cicarulang.⁴⁶

Above quotation uses some phrases and proverbs, such as *ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak* (going to water so as a river, to land so as a valley, the meaning is "the harmonious life, always together and remind each other in truth to achieve their goals"), *ulah pagirang-girang tampian* (do not have uppermost bath on the river, the meaning is "do not always be on top of each other by ignoring the common good, do not be selfish, do not fight) and *kagok asong* (feeling already insufficient, the meaning is feeling already go forward, embarrassed when backed again).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Al-Mawa'idz, *Sikepna Manusa Kana Agama*, 1:3–6.

⁴⁷ R. Satjadibrata, *Kamus Basa Sunda* (Bandung: PT Kiblat Buku Utama, 2005), 229. Rosidi, *Babasan & Paribasa: Kabeungharan Basa Sunda*, 24–50. Ajip Rosidi, *Babasan & Paribasa*, p. 24 and 49-50; Suwarsih Warnaen, *Pandangan Hidup Orang Sunda, Seperti Tercermin Dalam Tradisi Lisan dan Sastra Sunda*, Bandung: Bagian Proyek Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Sunda (*Sundanologi*) (Dirjen Kebudayaan, Depdikbu, 1987), 22.

Both phrase and proverb were expressed by the author when interpret the verse on the brotherhood of the believers. The author realizes that it is important to use the traditional Sundanese phrase as an effort to strengthen the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse. So, it is easily understood and touched into the heart of Sundanese readers. It appropriates with the inner wealth of Sundanese local wisdom which bring in line with the teachings of the Qur'ān.⁴⁸ It is a cultural strategy in shaping the identity of Islam-Sunda that remains based on the cultural richness of the Sundanese.

4. The formation of Sundanese piety

Another important issue of *tafsīr* and Sunda-Islam identity in Sundanese Islamic magazines is the formation of Sundanese piety. All the authors of the rubric of *tafsīr* actually aspire to the Sunda-Islam personality. They believed that Sundanese Muslims not only have to maintain the Sundanese identity, such as using Sundanese language and traditional expressions, but also become pious Muslims who obey God's rules based on the guidance of the Qur'ān and hadith. It is easy to identify their identities as a Muslim when they have the identity of Sunda.⁴⁹ This Sunda-Islam personality, for instance, was described in one of articles on *tafsīr* of *surah* Al-An'am [QS. 6: 154] in *Al-Mawa'idz* magazine:

“Wa inna hādihā širāṭī mustaqīman fatabi'ūh.” (Al-qoer'an soerat Al-an'am ayat 154). “The religion of Islam is a fast journey, not bent, so you must embrace Islam.” Muslims seek a salvation, a life in the world and to gain happiness in hereafter. It will not work except by living in harmony, helping each other, then they were given a social rule of mutual support, it was called as millah, in other words all Muslims unite and obey the teachings of Islam. The mutual support among Muslims must use the rules that prescribed in the Qur'ān and hadith, it should not use any other way, and should not make other guidelines, all already contained

⁴⁸ Ajip Rosidi, 'Pandangan Hidup Orang Sunda Seperti Nampak dalam Peribahasa', in *Pergumulan Islam dengan Kebudayaan Lokal di Tatar Sunda*, by Cik Hasan Bisri (Bandung: Kaki Langit, 2005), 4–8.

⁴⁹ Julian Millie, *Splashed by the Saint: Ritual Reading and Islamic Sanctity in West Java* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 13. Julian Millie and Dede Syarif, *Islam dan Regionalisme* (Bandung: Kiblat, 2015), 10.

in the Qur'ān. It was called as *minhaj sunnah shir'ah*, the tradition of Islamic law system ... Hajj Dahlan, Cicarulang.”⁵⁰

Above quotation of *tafsīr* Al-An'am [QS. 6: 154] asserts that Muslims must use the rules of the Qur'ān and hadith in order to create the cooperation effort well. It should not use any other way. This is the main mission of the interpreter in order to make both the Qur'ān and hadith as the primary guidance in realizing a harmonious life. Using these two basic guidelines, Sundanese Muslims try to shape the pious personality as the identity of Sunda-Islam in the Sundanese magazine. This is similar with other scholar findings that the way of life of Sundanese people shifted toward Islamic beliefs which acknowledge the oneness of God or *tauhid*. It is very different with Sundanese people who lived in pre-Islamic period although they also believed in God.⁵¹ The rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazine reinforces the shift of that Sundanese believe.

5. Islamic scholar as the author of *tafsīr* in Sundanese magazine

The last issue that also important due to the identity of Islam-Sunda in Sundanese Islamic magazine is the position of *ajengan* or Sundanese Islamic scholar as the author of *tafsīr*. As already explained, the editors of the magazines are managed by *ajengans*.

Al-Imtisal magazine, for instance, is led by R.H.M. Saleh (Memed), Kiai Babakan Sumedang Tasikmalaya; *Tjahja Islam* is led by Moch. Anwar Sanuci who is supported by the editorial board, such as HM. Djakaria (Kiai Cilame), H. Mhd. Romli (Kiai Haurkuning) and Mh. ToeCHFah (a religious teacher in Majalaya); *Al-Hidajatoel Islamijah* is led by H. Ahmad Sanoesi and assisted by several *ajengans* in Sukabumi; *Al-Moe'min* is led by Wira Sendjaja and supported by *ajengans* and religious teachers; *Al-Moechtar* was published on the basis of the agreement of the famous seventeen *ajengans* in Priangan, such as H.M. Soedja'i (*ajengan* of Kudang Tasikmalaya), H.M. Nahrowi (*ajengan* of Keresek Cibatug Garut), R.H.M. Dimjati (*ajengan* of Sukamiskin Bandung), H. Achmad Sanoesie (*ajengan* of Tanah Tinggi Batavia), R.H.M. Noch (*Kaum* in Cianjur) and others;

⁵⁰ 'Sikepna Manusa Kana Agama', *Al-Mawa'idz*, 1933, 3–6.

⁵¹ Yus Rusyana et al., *Pandangan Hidup Orang Sunda, Seperti Tercermin dalam Masyarakat Dewasa Ini (Tahap III)* (Bandung: Depdikbud, Dirjen Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, 1988), 257–58.

Madjalah Al-Mushlih is led by KH. Sja'roni. One of the editors is Habib 'Uthman. The authors who mostly *ajengan* are members of Persatuan Alim Ulama Islam Indonesia, such as K.H. Sudja'i (Kudang), K.H.A. Dimjatie, K.H. Sudja'i (Cileunyi), K.H. Tb. Achmad (Menes), K.H. Rais (Pandeglang) and others; *Iber* magazine is led by kiai of PERSIS organization, K.H.E. Abdullah. He was assisted by his colleague, such as K.H. Ahyar Syuhada, K.H. Usman Shalehuddin, K.E. Nasrullah, KH. Abdurrahman Ks, and others; and *Bina Da'wah* magazine is led by Kiai M. Rusyad Nurdin. The author of rubric of *tafsir* is K.H. Uu Suhendar that published until now.

In contrast to Islamic scholars who occupied a religious officials in colonial administrative, *ajengan* was considered as a charismatic religious leader in society independently. They did not collaborate with the Sundanese elite group or *menak* in colonial bureaucracy. *Ajengan* has the meticulous ability to read the minds of his followers. Sundanese people have different respect for *ajengan* and '*ulama*', because it is determined by their influences. *Ajengan* symbolically plays an important role in rural communities in Priangan, particularly in fortifying the *ummah* and Islamic ideals against the threat of secular forces.⁵² There are also *ajengans* who also have the ability in the field of agriculture, trade, art, including the field of literacy in the form of management of Sundanese Islamic magazine.⁵³

Ajengan generally tries to maintain their independences that never collaborate with the Dutch colonial.⁵⁴ So, their position tends to be on the periphery. *Ajengan*, such as K.H. Ahmad Sanoesi (1888-1965) who founded *Al-Ittihadjatoel Islamijjah* magazine and Kiai M. Rusyad Nurdin (1918-2002) who pioneered *Bina Da'wah*, were known as an '*ulama*' who fight against the Dutch colonial politics. The political activity of Sanoesi was regarded disturbing *rust en orde* so that he was exiled in Batavia for several years. Meanwhile, Rusyad Nurdin also was known as a patriotist who had joined Hizbullah movement during post-independence. Both *ajengan* Sanoesi and Nurdin show their independences position in shaping the identity of

⁵² Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial*, trans. Umar Basalim and Andi Muarly Sunrawa (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), 1.

⁵³ Mohammad Iskandar, *Para Pengemban Amanah, Pergulatan Pemikiran Kiai dan Ulama di Jawa Barat, 1900-1950* (Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, 2001), 73.

⁵⁴ Jajat Burhanudin, 'Islamic Knowledge, Authority and Political Power: The 'Ulama in Colonial Indonesia' (Thesis, Leiden University, 2007), 76.

Islamic patriotist.⁵⁵ It is a form of Islamic identity that shaped in order to identify itself against other ideologies.

Several *ajengans*, such as Kiai Rusyad also has critical response to the communist and government policies, both the Old Order and the New Order.⁵⁶ Rusyad demonstrated his political Islam activities in opposition to Soekarno and Suharto's policies. He has been joined in Masyumi and the PRRI/Permesta so that was imprisonment during the Old Order government, and also rejected the national award from Suharto. Therefore, in the case of *asas tunggal* or sole principle of Pancasila in the New Order era, for instance, he showed his criticism through the rubric of *tafsīr* in *Bina Da'wah* magazine as illustrated in the interpretation of *surah Al-Ikhlās*.⁵⁷

In addition to the construction of Islamic politics identity, the identity of Islam-Sunda in the rubric of *tafsīr* is also relating to the identification of pre-Islamic elements which are supposed to be Islamized. K.H. E. Abdullah, a modernist Muslim activist of PERSIS in *Iber* magazine shows his responses to some Sundanese traditions which considered as polytheistic and superstitious.⁵⁸

Thus, the rubric of *tafsīr* written by charismatic *ajengan* shows the representation and role in shaping the identity of Islam-Sunda in society. It is a position that not only fortifies Sundanese people from an outside influences, such as colonial politics and pre-Islamic customs, but also become a kind of role model for the practice of Islam in the Sundanese society.⁵⁹ The rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines is not separated from the shaping of the Islam-Sunda identity.

⁵⁵ Jajang A . Rohmana, 'Al-Qur'ān Wa Al-Isti'mār: Radd Al-Shaykh Al-Hājj Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950) 'Alā Al-Isti'mār Min Khilāl Tafsīr Mal'Ja' Al-Ṭālibīn', *Studia Islamika* 22, no. 2 (2015): 297–332. li Baihaqi Mustafa, *KH. M. Rusyad Nurdin: Ulama, Pejuang, Politikus, Pemimpin Demokrat, Pendidik, dan Pendakwah* (Bandung: Multipro-LPESKI Yuavin, 2005).

⁵⁶ On critical response of Sundanese magazines to the communist issue, see Abdullah Mustappa, 'Majalah Sunda: Ragam Jurnalistik Sunda Melawan Komunisme', *Kiblat*, 2017.

⁵⁷ *Bina Da'wah*, 1986, 11.

⁵⁸ *Iber*, November 1982, 7.

⁵⁹ Robert Wessing, 'Cosmology and Social Behaviour in a West Javanese Settlement', *Ohio University: Center for International Studies Southeast Asia*, no. 47 (1978): 36.

CONCLUSION

Above all explanation highlight the significance of identity of Islam-Sunda in the modern era of Priangan. It is reflected in the rubric of qur'ānic commentary in Sundanese Islamic magazines. This study confirms that there is the same of Islam-Sunda identity in the magazines. It is the identity that was dominated by Islamic teachings. It, for instance, can be seen from the rubric of *tafsīr*, such as the interpretation of *suras* which have an important role in Sundanese daily life, the interpretation of Islamic stories, the use of Sundanese phrases that touch their hearts, the formation of a pious Sundanese personality and the involvement of Islamic scholars or *ajengan* as an exegete of the Qur'ān. The Sundanese Islamic magazine has an important role in strengthening the identity of Islam-Sunda which is increasingly dominating the sociocultural life of the Sundanese Muslims. Although they still practice Sundanese customs, but these customs were islamized by *ajengan*. So, there is lack of local syncretic beliefs and practices in Sundanese Muslims daily lives than Islamic practices. Regardless of their background, Sundanese are tolerant of Sundanese values. They have a tolerantly practices of Sundanese culture that can easily be accommodated into Islam-Sunda identity. It can be seen from the rubric of *tafsīr* in Sundanese Islamic magazines.

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